

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: MAGANBHAI P. DESAI

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TWO ANNAS

NOTES

To the Teachers

The President Dr. Rajendra Prasad, opening the new building of a college of the Delhi University, made an observation which is worthy of attention from the teaching world.

Emphasizing the great need of selfless pursuit of knowledge in our country at present, he said, "In our literature of olden days, we come across innumerable intellectual luminaries who pursued knowledge for its own sake and who lived a life of complete dedication to it."

He further noted that one of the problems facing college authorities was desertion from staff. He agreed that it was not unnatural, as one might try to improve one's prospects and be on the look-out for better openings. However, he remarked, "Although we cannot be so unrealistic as to altogether ignore or even depreciate the importance of material prosperity in life, I dare say there are values which transcend monetary considerations." And he added that one of the causes of the lack of respect for teachers among students these days, he believed, was the absence of enthusiasm or love for his noble profession in the teacher. This obviously tends to diminish in the student the sense of discipline born of respect for the teacher. It does not inspire the student with the love of learning for its own sake. Surely this will spell disaster for the spread and advancement of true learning and real education in our land.

5-10-54

M. P.

An Undesirable Regression

If any proof was needed to show how the public mind will be affected by the revival of conferring titles or awards etc., it is to be had by having a casual look at our daily press. Readers must have noted that even important papers like *The Times of India*, *The Hindu* etc. have begun to write 'Sir' Mirza Ismail, 'Sardar' Panikkar and so on, as of old. The regression to old ways is certainly not necessary nor helpful for the advancement of the democratic order. It shows that there is a very thin line of demarcation if at all, between titles and awards. The difference is only technical and it is better not to avail of it for killing the spirit of the Constitution, which discourages the use of honorific prefixes or suffixes to our names, except those of a military or academic nature.

5-10-54

M. P.

SOCIALIZE THE CLOTH INDUSTRY

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

A newspaper gives the following statistics of the progress of mill cloth industry in India during the last 100 years :

Year	Number of mills	Spindles (in thousands)	Looms (in thousands)	Workers (in thousands)
1854	1	30	—	0.50
1855	2	47	—	0.75
1856	4	64	—	1.20
1858	17	108	0.3	2
1869	58	393	4.6	10
1880	108	1,471	13	40
1889	190	2,667	22	92
1901	259	4,933	41	156
1913	292	6,597	94	251
1923	344	7,732	143	344
1933	398	9,580	189	435
1943	407	10,200	198	625
1953	—	11,876	199	732

This progress of mill-cloth industry during the past hundred years is noteworthy in many ways. It is really very creditable that our people were able to establish and expand this industry to its present extent during the British rule and in the face of an unequal competition from foreign mills.

The writer who has furnished these statistics does not say anything about the amount of money invested in it. It will certainly be very interesting to know it from someone who knows it. It should also be noted that all this money, running into several crores of rupees, having been drawn and pressed into the service of private ownership, is benefiting the owners of the industry.

Besides, it has to be remembered that while on one hand it grew and prospered, on the other, in conjunction with Lancashire it was also responsible for the destruction of the great Khadi industry of our country. Considering the vast unemployment to be found in our midst and the complete disintegration of our village life, this phenomenon of 'progress through destruction' naturally induces one to think along new and different lines. In the new set-up after Swaraj, this question has assumed even greater importance than before.

During the British rule the mill industry, in the name of Swadeshi, could appeal to our sense of patriotism and as such received a good measure of encouragement and patronage. It is no longer so and the time has come to re-examine

its place and importance in the economy of the country.

The statistics given above show that in the course of hundred years, the mill-industry has been able to provide work only to seven and a quarter lakh workers. And if, as the mill-owners desire, they are allowed to modernize their plants, the number is bound to go down. However, it is said that production will rise. It is clear that so far as eliminating unemployment and providing more employment is concerned, this industry cannot help us much. And yet it will continue to eat up the accumulated capital of the country, the profit accruing only to a few individuals.

Nor can it be said that this industry can or will become self-reliant. It is not so today. It can maintain itself and grow only if the Government provides help and support in various ways. For example, the taxation policy has to be devised in its favour, facilities for export trade provided, help rendered in finding out foreign markets and in withstanding competition from other countries. And if it sells its cloth within the country, as it does today, the country must be prepared to suffer unemployment among vast numbers of its working population — by no means an unimportant condition we need to fulfil in order to keep it going.

Another aspect of this industry which too must be remembered is that the Government earns from it annually crores of rupees by way of taxes. In this respect the Government and the mill-industry are so to say interlinked. It is necessary to see that this does not in any way affect the country's interests adversely. Viewed from this standpoint all centralized industries are linked up with the Government in that they serve as sources of revenue to the latter.

Looking at the industry from all these points of view, there arises before us a question of great importance, viz., in what direction now after hundred years are we to reform such centralized industries? It was in seeking an answer to this question that the sociologists and economists of Europe discovered socialism. It is true that socialism as an ideology of class-conflict has not much chance in our country. But if our centralized industries too develop along the same lines as in Europe and our Government favours such development, then the question of capitalism as referred to above cannot but arise here also. In fact, as we can see, it has already started raising its head and political parties in the country are acting under the shadow of its influence.

It has been said that the mill-cloth industry in India would not be nationalized, that is, it will continue to function on the basis of private ownership. In that case it would be necessary to exercise such control over its working and development that it will occupy its just place in the new Sarvodaya economy, but not more as it does today.

Economically a nation has not merely to increase production but also to see that all are immediately provided with work, their pur-

chasing power raised, and everyone enabled to do his part in producing what has to be produced. For that we will have to build up a new economy in which, unlike in the centralized industries, there will be no room for the doctrine 'might is right'.

The following are some of the things which our new industrial policy must adopt if we now intend to take to this new line:

1. Food, clothing and articles of general household use should not be produced through mechanized industries which benefit only a few. They should be entirely free from control either by outside countries or by particular classes of our own. The whole of our people will produce all these things through village industries and thus achieve real economic independence.

2. The Government should give up its desire for income from centralized industries in respect of such articles.

3. Instead, it should adopt a policy calculated to promote village industries. Moreover, the working of the mills should be so controlled and restricted that they may not compete with the village industries.

4. For example, in order to enable the handloom industry to develop to its full capacity, the mills should be asked to produce the necessary yarn of appropriate quality as a matter of the first priority. Production of such yarn should be made compulsory for them, that is, the handloom should not be dependent on the mills. On the contrary, the mills should be conducted so as to serve the handloom.

5. In addition, if in order to help the production of Khadi and hand-spun yarn, it is felt necessary, the mills may be asked to produce good slivers on an adequate scale.

6. If after fulfilling all these obligations, mills still have the capacity for more work, they may use it for producing cloth for foreign markets, care being taken to see that the goods so produced are exported to those countries only where they are needed and where there is a natural scope for such exchange of goods. A blind scramble for earning foreign exchange anyhow, on the part of a peace-loving country like ours, is not proper nor deserving. Today there is a great deal of competition among the nations of the world for foreign markets, which creates an atmosphere of conflict and war. This should be avoided. We have to remember that we are against imperialism in any form.

7. The evils of large-scale centralized industries can be avoided by reorganizing them as small-scale cottage industries using suitable hand-driven or power-driven machines. For example, people should be encouraged to produce hand-spun yarn and suitable machines should be devised for that purpose. This may, in course of time, make it possible to provide a good bulk of yarn for handlooms through hand-spinning.

8. If the cloth industry is reorganized in this way, other auxiliary industries too will become decentralized. This will increase the volume of employment, with the result that the talent of the educated classes will also be directed to various crafts. This will naturally give a right orientation to our education also.

It is necessary to consider the country's economic, social, educational and industrial plans from this point of view. Let us hope that the next Five Year Plan will adopt this broader Sardodaya outlook in formulating its projects in various fields. In its absence, not only real Swaraj but elimination of war and world-peace must also remain impossible of actual achievement. It is also the only way to bring about the true nationalization or socialization of the cloth industry. Our people can never have real economic independence without it.

17-9-'54

(From the original in Gujarati)

THE KANUNGO COMMITTEE REPORT

[Shri S. R. Savada, President of the Indian National Trade Union Congress, has issued the following statement to the Press:]

The long awaited report of the Kanungo Committee has at last seen the light of the day. The Government of India was depending upon the findings and recommendations of this Committee in order to formulate its policy with regard to various problems facing the Textile Industry in this country. I am afraid, the report has not been able to make any helpful contribution. I am not surprised at the disappointing results as most of the members who were entrusted with the task, were not intimately conversant with the problems of the Industry.

The Government was anxious to find a proper place for the handloom industry in the country's economy. The handloom industry does not only produce cloth, but has great potentiality of providing employment to a large number of workers in the country. The Committee suggests that the handloom industry should be modernized and 20,000 weavers every year for six years have to be thrown out of employment. What will be the fate of the workers who will be thus deprived of their normal and natural occupation? Who is there to find out and provide other suitable occupation so that they may not have to suffer the hardships resulting from unemployment? The handloom industry has been considered, if adequately protected and carefully developed, capable of providing occupations for additional persons. But we find here no effort being made to explore possibilities in this direction. Instead, we have a drastic suggestion to curtail even the present capacity of the industry to give employment. We wonder, what satisfaction or solace these recommendations will carry to the poor handloom weavers whose interest, it was thought, will receive careful consideration at the hands of this Committee.

The large-scale Textile Industry also has been treated by the Committee in a haphazard manner and I am afraid, the Committee have treaded on the grounds which were beyond their terms of reference. Even if they desired to look into the question of rehabilitation and rationalization, they should have consulted the Labour Organizations which are very vitally interested in both these problems. I am not aware of any such consultations undertaken by the Committee. Rationalization is a process which, as everybody knows, is not a matter that can be imposed. The very word "rationalization" suggests that the utilization

of the resources both human and material should be in a rational way. The facts mentioned in the Report, I am afraid, do not warrant the conclusions to which the Committee has come to with regard to the installation of the automatic looms. On the one hand, the Committee appears to feel that the automatic looms are not good for the Industry, and also feels that they are not suitable for most of the cloth produced for internal consumption. The only reason which they have advanced for introduction of automatic looms is that they may be useful for promoting the export trade, but at the same time, the Committee says that the export market is full of fluctuations and is uncertain, and therefore, it is very unwise to rely upon that market. It passes one's comprehension how the Committee has suggested that 50 per cent of the existing looms should be converted into automatic looms if the facts mentioned above were before them. The Committee has not made any suggestion with regard to 4,000 weavers who are likely to be thrown out of employment every year according to their calculation. But when the Committee makes the suggestion, it realizes the gravity of the situation that may be created and makes a vain attempt to soften the harshness of its suggestion by adding that this replacement of looms and displacement of workers should be done only by securing agreements with the Labour Organizations and if this is not possible, in pursuance of the principles laid down by the Government.

The Kanungo Committee's recommendation regarding rehabilitation of industry is highly impractical and against the inherent interests of the country. The proposed Industrial Development Corporation is supposed to finance the rehabilitation of the Textile Industry. The public should know that the Government is making available to this Corporation a huge fund, interest-free, and I feel that funds made thus available should not be frittered away in bolstering up uneconomic mills which, even according to the Committee, have come to grief because of mismanagement and for not making provisions out of the huge profits of the war period. I do not understand why the tax-payer of this country should be called upon to rehabilitate the units which are either uneconomic or mismanaged. Are "the old equipment, unsound financial structure and bad management" to be transferred to the public exchequer? I wonder why such a retrograde suggestion has been made by the Committee and I feel that the tax-payers of this country and the public at large will, under no circumstances, accept such a proposition. There is, besides, nothing in the Report to give any idea regarding the necessity of replacing the existing looms. Has the Committee cared to inquire as to how many looms have become unproductive, where these looms are installed at present, and whether it has become really inevitable to replace them all by automatic looms? These are matters which the Committee should have studied and it is with regard to all these facts that the people of this country require enlightenment.

The most serious problem which the country and the Government have to face today is the problem of unemployment. The country is anxious to see that a pool of employment is created before curtailing in any way the capacity of an industry to provide employment. If the Committee had offered any practical suggestions for the further development and extension of the handloom industry which would aid in creating such a pool, it would have been a source of relief. Instead, the Committee, it is sad to say, has only added to the difficulties that are facing the people and the State.

I trust the Government of India, before accepting any of the suggestions, mentioned by the Committee, will give careful consideration to all relevant and important matters which the Committee has failed to examine and will also consult the parties whose interests are likely to be vitally affected by them.

Ahmedabad, 30-9-'54

HARIJAN

Oct. 16

1954

AN UNHELPFUL DOCUMENT

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

Shri S. R. Vasavada, President of the I.N.T.U.C., drew my attention to the Report of the Textile Inquiry Committee, Government of India, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, as also the statement he issued to the Press on the matter; and he kindly sent a copy of both. I have gone through both the documents and endorse the remarks made by the I.N.T.U.C. President in his statement. The statement is published elsewhere in this issue.

The Inquiry Committee was appointed by the Government of India at the end of 1952, under the chairmanship of Shri Nityananda Kanungo, M.P. (Orissa). Shri Kanungo is one of the old constructive workers of Orissa, and, if I remember aright, was a member of the Gandhi Seva Sangh, a body of workers devoted to constructive work on Gandhian lines. Being a member of the Gandhi Seva Sangh myself, I was particularly interested to know about the Report of a Committee working under Shri Kanungo's chairmanship. I am not an expert like Shri Vasavada who knows the textile mill industry. However, I am interested in a way, in the textile industry because I know a little about Khadi and what it stands for in our economic life. Shri Kanungo, being an old co-worker, I expected that the Report under his chairmanship will be a document that will give us a composite picture of how we must plan for our national textile need, keeping in view the long-range aspect of rebuilding our economy in the interests of the poor, i.e. on Sarvodaya lines. I am sorry to report that the Kanungo Report falls below this expectation, and may not be a helpful document if we wish to take any basic or radical step further in reconstructing our textile industry.

It is as well we remind to ourselves the circumstances under which the Committee was instituted. The question of the handloom weavers was courageously taken up by the ex-Chief Minister of Madras, Shri Rajagopalachari. He enunciated the problem in the following terms:

"The cottage handloom industry flourishes today as well as it did in ancient times and the fingers of the weavers are as deft today as ever they were. There are more looms today than there were in the old days. There was no competition whatsoever in ancient days, but today there is a giant competitor in the shape of mill-manufactured cloth which has copied the handloom and like an ungrateful child seems to kill the mother.

"If it is a question as to whether one should buy mill-cloth or handloom cloth, I have no hesitation in making my most earnest appeal that you should prefer the handloom cloth and feed the families of the

handloom weavers who follow an honest and noble occupation.

"The mill industry with plentiful capital and a strong organization for production and distribution and for propaganda, has not been able to kill the handloom, thanks to the fly-shuttle and to the traditional skill of our weaver families. The handloom has maintained its own against the mill and is not only not dead, but is quite able to supply plenty of cloth, and very good cloth and cloth which is attractive enough to suit the tastes of consumers of real good taste, both men and women.

"No mathematical calculations or economic doctrines can be a substitute for human happiness where numerous families are concerned, who follow a traditional occupation based on family apprenticeship. The State provides no workshops, no training centres and no educational facilities. Everything is provided in the little cottage of the weaver and in his family life. No call is made on the State for land or capital or training institutes or supervision. This national asset we should not lose or allow to be destroyed by neglect.

"My appeal on behalf of the handloom should not be understood to be a letting down of Khadi. A social welfare movement should not deteriorate into an obscurantist denominational doctrine or metaphysics. The weaver prefers to use mill yarn. Let him do it. For it enables him to produce enough to maintain himself against the competition of the weaving mills. Khadi is also handloom cloth. The appeal on behalf of the handloom is automatically an appeal on behalf of Khadi also.

"Freedom and political rights must rest on occupational balance. Political freedom cannot but break down if we neglect the foundations of national life. Every twelfth person in our State is a weaver. Do not let him starve." (*Harijan*, 12-7-1952)

This irresistible plea was conceded by the Government who moved in the matter chiefly in the following two three ways:

1. Reservation of certain production (Dhoti and Saree) in favour of the handloom industry.
2. Establishment of an All-India Handloom Board.
3. A cess was imposed on textile mills to secure finance for helping the handloom industry.
4. More looms were not encouraged or allowed for the mills.

The Kanungo Report notes that all this has helped the handloom industry and it must continue. It further studies the additional requirement of cloth upto 1960 and lays down how best it can be met. The substance of these recommendations is that "the ultimate replacement of the handloom by the power-loom is, perhaps, unescapable"; and a graded programme of work to be done up to 1960 is accordingly laid down, calculating at the rate of 18 yards per head and taking into consideration the expected increase of population up to 1960.

The same logic favouring mechanized production leads the Committee to recommend rationalization which only means automatization of looms, displacing a great number of weavers.

The programme recommended by the Committee, viz., of turning handlooms into powerlooms also results into throwing out thousands of weavers. However, it is surprising that the Committee does not suggest any expansion in the handloom industry. On the other hand it suggests increase of mill spindleage and even suggests import of yarn. The Committee would have no suggestion to make how Khadi industry can be helpful here. It is rather surprising that in the body of the Report there is no mention of the A. I. Khadi Board in any way and the whole problem is almost bypassed with the suggestion that a special inquiry be made as regards this industry. In fact, the Report does not even note that Khadi is one of "the various sectors of the cotton textile industry."

The Committee defines the object of its inquiry in the following narrow and restricted way: "What should be done to the mill industry, to the power-loom industry, and to the handloom industry, such as they are today...." (para 69 of the Report). And it says that "at this stage when rationalized planning for the textile industry as a whole is being undertaken," it envisages that there will remain two main sectors of the industry, a. The textile mill and b. The powerloom industry. It acknowledges that this will mean displacement of existing labour in both the main sectors. It does not envisage, much less suggest, increase of employment in the handloom industry by progressive restriction of the centralized mill industry. In a passing way, it notes that decentralization of spinning is possible through tapping the potentialities of such a small mechanized spinning unit like Mr Gupte's, at the Technological Laboratory, Matunga, or the Ekambaram hand-spinning unit exhibited at the A. I. Khadi and Village Industries Exhibition at New Delhi. However, it would say nothing more about it.

The whole mistake that seems to have misled the Committee almost to recommend continuing the status quo in what has been done by Government during the last two years for the handloom industry, is that it forgot that our future industrial advancement has to be labour-intensive and to remove our disastrous unemployment; and it took to the orthodox and suicidal line of capital-intensive programme of blind mechanization, forgetting the huge question that this line of work has raised in the West. It also seems to have understood that the policy of allowing the private mill industry sector to exist meant the status quo, i.e., no further reservations or regulations in the industry than the ones prescribed by Government till now. Thus, for example, it would not dare suggest a programme of integration of handlooms with mills, which, if honestly undertaken, could progressively displace the mill loomage, to the

distinct advantage of expanding employment in the handloom industry. The latter is our largest industry next to agriculture, and unless we chalk out a rationalized programme of its expansion and the spread of Khadi, we can now be sure that economic Swaraj or removal of unemployment will be only a dream, and things like the Kanungo Committee recommendations will only tinker with the problem and will be no good in the larger context of this great problem. I draw the attention of the reader to another article "Socialize the Cloth Industry" elsewhere in this issue, which deals with this larger question.

The Kanungo Report raises many more questions than it solves, but it is good that it focusses the attention of the public, even in a negative way, to the problem of unemployment and the need of increasing production which can be solved only through vigorous and undivided attention to Khadi and the allied village industries. It is a great pity that this Committee does not seem to have discussed anything with the A. I. K. & V. I. Board and almost bypassed the question by suggesting a separate Committee to go into it, while, at the same time, allocating almost no place for Khadi in the scheme of increased production suggested by it. The term of reference to the Committee says that it should go into the question of "utilization of our resources both in men and material in the direction that is socially most desirable." This main aspect of its work, I believe, could have been better done and it leaves much to be desired. I feel that if a charge is laid that the recommendations are loaded more than warranted by the situation, in favour of capital and the private mill industry sector, it will be hard to refute it. In India at present we are on the parting of ways: Are we going to follow the pattern of the industrialism of the West and be lost to peace and full employment, or have we a way which, while adopting the best and the most helpful in it, takes a line that is most suited to our genius and the special circumstances of our predominantly rural community? The Report perorates in its concluding para (137), that "with the adoption of power and modern tools it is not impossible to envisage the continuance of the decentralized form of weaving industry." Why, 'weaving' only, is a question that the Committee has not touched. If, as it says further in its peroration, "indeed, the Constitution envisages the avoidance of concentration of economic power in a few hands", then the whole textile industry must be socialized through progressive decentralization of all its processes, chiefly spinning and weaving. It would be good if a new Committee is appointed to go into this larger question, so that it may help the Planning Commission to lay down its second Five Year Plan.

VINOBA IN MUZAFFARPUR AGAIN—II

(By "Dadu")

Be True and Sincere

"I have been in your province for more than two years now. Please just have a look within and let me know how many of you have given even twenty-four hours to Bhoodan work in this period. The Bihar Congress has passed a resolution calling upon its members to donate their one-sixth and collect 32 lakhs of acres. But the Congress has proved a traitor to its own resolution. The Bihar Praja Socialist Party also passed a similar resolution to realize the quota. It too has betrayed it. These are harsh words indeed. But history is not going to excuse you for doing no work in spite of Baba's two years' stay in your midst," declared Vinoba on Sunday, 5th September, while addressing in the small hours of morning, a gathering at Athri, a village on his way to Belsand in Muzaffarpur district. "There is no clash," he added, "between Bhoodan and flood relief work. Moreover, I have not come across any flood-relief work for which credit may be given to these workers. Some of you appear like a flash of lightning on the day when I come in your area. This won't do at all. You have to work consistently and devotedly."

To The Zamindar

The evening meeting was very heavily attended. "It was due," said Vinoba, "to their anxiety to hear the message of religion—not the message of a bath in the Ganga, life-long cruelty to their own brethren and 'Shraddha' at the end—but of true religion. Soul is one, indestructible and indivisible. Yet we in India have divided humanity into fragments and raised thick walls." "They are all false," Vinoba pointed out, "for you cannot distinguish between the ashes of a Brahmana or Harijan, landlord or landless. They ask me where I come from. Well, रहना नहीं बेस बिराना है।

(I am not to stay here: my house is not here). I have come here but to fulfil a religious mission. It is not my work but God's." He went on, "Rama defeated Ravana. No, Ravana lost because of Mandodari, Vibhishan and Tritata in his own camp. So also would be the case of the big zamindars, for their children have already begun to cry aloud that 'Dhan aur dharti bat ke rahegi' (wealth and land must and would be distributed). I claim that this movement is in as much interest of the rich as that of the poor. The former should take it up earnestly and secure the leadership of the society."

Curse of Untouchability

The next halt was at Parsauni; a village badly affected by the floods. As usual, the greatest sufferers were the landless Harijans. Their dilapidated houses and withered faces presented a very heart-rending scene. In his post-prayer address, Vinoba observed that the health and wealth of the society depended on the labour of these Harijans. They are at the base of our social structure. "Now if a householder were to build a three or four storeyed house but on a weak foundation, will that house stay? It will come down with a crash. Likewise our society would be crippled down if its base—the Harijan community—were decayed or shattered. The worst of it is that we even abhor touching them. We can touch every animal but not man. Our Pandas also frighten us that God would leave the temple at their bare sight. What a coward and vagabond god it is! In fact, they do not know what God is. Immersed like fish in the water of greed, they are spreading falsehood in the name of God."

A New Evil—Farm-dari

Turning to owners of big farms, Vinoba said, "Zamindari is being replaced by 'farm-dari'. I have seen big farms where fine wheat is produced, but the labourers get merely grass to eat. They get the worst food in lieu of money, while wheat produced by the sweat of their toil goes to Patna, Calcutta and Bombay. So wretched is the state of affairs in these farms."

Again, he added, "Elections have brought in new evils and aggravated caste differences. Our village crafts and industries were ruined during the British rule. And I very much regret to state that this ruin continues, rather more crushingly. Drinking, cheating and telling lies are on the increase."

Vinoba advised them, "I cannot relieve your burden. None can do it. You have to come out of the mire yourselves. I can only suggest ways and means of your emancipation. You have to stand on your feet, meet your needs yourselves, live together with love and trust."

Floods and Cinema-shows

Heavy rainfall and violent winds rendered the walk to Shivahar on the seventh not very likely. Referring to the floods in his evening discourse, Vinoba said, "The suffering of North Bihar has moved the heart of people all over the country. The Government is also doing all it can. But what are the local people doing? I am told that the cinemas in Muzaffarpur city are running as usual as if nothing has happened in this district. Now what is this? Could not the people abstain from the cinemas for a few days and send their ticket-money for the help of the distressed? Their help would have produced scenes not less charming than the false ones on the screen. But this thing does not strike us at all. For, we have not the family feeling. But I tell you that so long as we do not cultivate the family feeling, our troubles would not go. However much help you may get from without, if you are not one from within as members of a family ought to be, our future is dark. I, therefore, appeal to you to develop the family feeling. Please donate all lands, transfer the ownership from your individual hands to that of the village as a whole and live like a family. There should be no differences between man and man—these artificial differences. Had God desired differences, He could have well provided half a dozen noses to every rich man or Minister and a dozen ones to a Chief Minister, or sent a baby in a millionaire's house dressed up with jewels and ornaments. But no, He has given one nose to each and sent every child naked. As there can be no ownership of air and water, so also land cannot be privately owned. Every tiller must get it. I warn you that in the India of tomorrow, no non-cultivator will be able to keep land with him."

Town v. Village Life

We were at Dhankaul on Thursday. It is a small village and the audience in the evening prayer was a typically village mass. Addressing them after the prayer, Vinoba remarked that a village differed from a city in the fact that they recognized their neighbours in the former but not in the latter. "The bigger a town," said he, "the less they care for their neighbours. They care only for the place where they are, even as the ticket-purchasers are interested in the booking office and not in the people gathered there. Or look at the flies on a dung. They worry little for each other. Their only interest is seeking. So also the city people are fond of seeking money. They live there for money and not for love."

Welfare State v. Self-help

Later asking them to wake up, he said, "These days Government are gaining influence. The word 'Welfare State' is much talked of, i.e. the welfare of the people is the responsibility of the State. For five years they hold the contract of your welfare. But is it possible? Can the problems of five lakhs of villages be solved from Delhi or Patna? I can understand their control over the railways, mines, dams and foreign affairs. But how can they execute the whole burden of the village—of your feeding, clothing, shelter, health, education, etc.? So all that is to be done is to be done by yourselves alone."

Vinoba called upon them to begin setting things in order of their own accord. For this they would have to do several things. Firstly, land redistribution, only the tiller can keep the land with him. Secondly, village industries,

they would have to take a vow to avoid all such mill-made things as can be prepared in the villages. Thirdly, they must have their own education and teachers. Fourthly, the villages must be kept neat and clean. Fifthly, they must abstain from city-vices, viz., smoking, cinema-going, drinking etc. Sixthly, they must meet once a week, pray to God together, discuss village problems and its betterment.

Productive Physical Labour

Rewasi was the next halt. Workers reported that some big landlords were offering small and unbecoming land donations. Vinoba dwelt on the topic in his evening discourse. He said, "If the people are not prepared to do productive physical labour, they will lose their hold. Much of their land will pass away in the education of their children. I would suggest to allot a small plot, say half a bigha, for your personal work and attention. You will gain thereby. To take my personal instance, I weighed 90 lbs. when I first began working in the field. I dug for only two minutes on the first day. I got tired and sat down. Every day I raised the duration of my work by one minute. At the end of a month I was working there for half an hour. Later I could go up to six hours, whereby I also gained in health. I am sure that if you follow this practice you can turn into good farmers. You would then find that with a little skill and effort, you can reap as much harvest in five bighas as in six. Thus you lose nothing by donating the one-sixth. On the other hand, production of the country could thereby increase, the landless would obtain a permanent footing and you would enjoy rare peace."

He continued, "I do not beg charity. Mine is to enter your life and transform it. I want to establish new values. If you give me Bhoodan without comprehending the thought behind it, I do not want your gift. I want you to grasp its spirit, which makes me walk every day. In case you get convinced, you will draw others as 'one lamp lights another, nor grows less.' Let you be the vanguards of this revolution." Since then, the return of *Dan Patras* has become a regular feature. It is producing very happy and unforeseen reactions.

Cheating by Giving Less

Walking down some ten miles next morning, we reached Babhangama at about eight. Several *Dan Patras* were returned. This moved some of the signatories very much and they met Vinoba in the afternoon. It was virtually a 'love-market', as I should say.

"Baba, you have returned my *Dan Patra*," said a zamindar pathetically.

"Would you please tell me how much land you have?" asked he politely.

"Thirty bighas."

"And you have given me how much?"

"One bigha," replied he falteringly.

"Now if I accept your one bigha what would they say? Won't they say that you have cheated Baba? I do not want that you should be ill-talked about."

The zamindar was silent.

"Come up, give me more!"

"All right two bighas more."

"You seem to be a pucca businessman," said Vinoba smilingly. "I am reminded of the vegetable market where the customer gradually raises the offer." All laughed at it. He added, "I would request you to follow the *Vichar* (thought) behind it and offer five bighas." The zamindar was quiet. Asked Vinoba, "What is the hesitation about? If you can offer three, you can very well come up to five."

And he did come. I could see peace and silent smile on the landlords's face. So also others.

Bhoodan is Compassion

In his post-prayer address, Vinoba placed the main thought behind the Bhoodan. "It is *Karuna* or compassion. Society has developed," said he, "the qualities of love

and respect after centuries of effort: love for youngers and respect for elders. Compassion comes between the two. It is for all and by all. I want the workers to develop this virtue. I do not believe in the parties, nor I belong to any. My reliance is on inner virtue, rather than on external form. I trust that my work is spreading simply because I have found no group, party or institution. A compassionate man lifts the whole society up. It was the height of compassion in Tulsidas that made him an immortal Poet. "Poets there are many, but where is that compassion? Long ago, Buddha gave us this message of compassion. In our own lifetime, Mahatma Gandhi lived it. So let the small workers remain small. But they must generate compassion. They will then be stored up with a faith which would move everybody in his or her depths and the desired result will follow."

Vinoba's Birth-day

The coming day of the week was none other than September 11, 1954, when Vinoba stepped into the sixtieth year of his pilgrimage on this earth. We were to camp that day at Sitamarhi, the sub-divisional headquarters. After entering the town, Vinoba was conducted to the grounds of Radhakrishna Goenka College where he inaugurated the Sarodaya Study Circle run by the Bihar Branch of the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial National Trust.

Gandhian Literature in Schools and Colleges

He made a few very penetrating remarks in his ten minutes' speech on the occasion. He began, "It pains me very much when I find that the Gandhi National Memorial Fund has to keep Gandhian literature in the schools and colleges of the country. That should, in fact, form a part of study in our institution. I wonder whether there is any other country in the world where her great men have almost no entrance in the colleges and universities of that country. What can be more shameful for a college than that the literature of that great man who not only taught us the way of freedom but gave the world the method to solve its problems, should be supplied by Gandhi Memorial Fund, I cannot say. My amazement increases when I see that the Government repeats day in and day out its faith in the Gandhian methods and when Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru also frequently stresses the need of non-violence in public affairs and yet our colleges and universities do not give a place to the literature of that saviour in the curriculum."

He added, "However, I must point out that Gandhiji is far greater than his writings. Generally authors are not so great as their works. But the converse is true about Gandhiji. He wrote nothing that he did not experience in his personal life. And if he experienced sixteen annas, he would write of only one anna. There is a force of conviction and actual practice behind his writings." Concluding he advised, "Hence you must go into the depths of his words which are as dear as life. They alone are going to save us. The deeper you go into them the better it is. And, lastly, you must make the best efforts you can to turn into practice what you acquire from a study of this immortal literature."

Virtue of Non-acquisitiveness

Vinoba's post-prayer speech lasted for eighty minutes in which he gave a very comprehensive exposition of the spirit behind the Bhoodan movement. He remarked, "As an individual passes from the stage of Brahmacharya to Garhasthya or family life, and then to that of Vanaprastha or Sannyasa, so also the Dharma of society changes from time to time. Thus we have to establish and adapt new values, different from those that are recognized today and find place in the Constitution. The right to ownership and individual property is acknowledged today. Now I want to say something seemingly just the contrary. We have to found a non-acquisitive (*sangraha mukta*) society, i.e., wealth should remain with the society and not with the individual as at present. There is nothing new about it. Non-acquisitiveness as an individual virtue is an old creed. Great souls have practised it the world over. But

now I want it to grow into a social duty, to form the basis of the social structure, to develop as a social function. In this age of science, we are so much dependent on each other that one leading an isolated individual life cannot survive. The family conception has to be developed on a widely global scale. This is the call of the age."

He further observed, "You must grasp the significance of the times and refuse to live in the old world with its harmful values. This is the age of science when we cannot think in isolation. As in science so also in *Adhyatma*. When it is found that the experiment of non-acquisitiveness is successful in the laboratory, i.e., in an individual's home, it must now be given a trial in the bigger field of human family. If we do not enlarge the field, the terrific forces of science would throw us off, even wipe us out and perhaps deservedly so. I have every respect for science. It is a mighty force like *Atma Gyan*. While science imparts knowledge of the world without, *Atma Gyan* does of that within. We must incorporate both of them in a single whole and act accordingly, which precisely is the aim of Bhoodan Yagna. Hence whatever you give please give intelligently. It is no charity but invoking the religious spirit, *Dharma-Chakra-Pravartan*."

Avoid Conflict of Parties

He added, "The second thing that I want Bhoodan Yajna to do is to eliminate the conflict of majority versus minority. This has led to formation of parties which have torn hearts asunder. Those working in a party do not think of the good of the village. Bhoodan seeks to wipe out these differences and replace party-cum-power politics by *Pakshateeta Loka-Niti* (party-free, popular policy). This is Sarvodaya policy. If all parties work a programme unitedly, it makes the country strong and impregnable. If party-differences continue, they will entrench casteism, an evil which, though attacked by all reformers from Ram Mohan Roy to Gandhiji, is deepening itself, so much so that Pandit Nehru says that its heat in Bihar reaches even Delhi. Bhoodan pleads for an above-party, united activity."

Develop Jana-shakti

Vinoba declared, "The third thing is to develop *Jana-shakti* or self-reliant power of people. Today, fear haunts even the biggest nations like America and Russia. Though *Rajas* have gone *Rajaniti* continues in the world, as in our own country. *Angrez* have gone but *Angraziat* continues. What is the way out? Less and less departments of public activities should be handed over to the Government. This will generate great strength and enable us to develop as we choose."

After the prayer-meeting Vinoba visited the 'Shraddha-nand Anathalaya' run by Baba Narsingh Das who has served consistently the people of Sitamarhi sub-division for the last thirty-two years. There are about twenty children in the Anathalaya whom he nurses like a mother. In his message to the Anathalaya Vinoba suggested to rename it as 'Svavalamban Ashram' (Self-reliance Ashram) for children were taught there the various crafts to become self-reliant and thus stand on their own feet in after-life.

It was now nearing eight. Vinoba took his last meal of the day, i.e., about thirty tolas (12 oz.) of curds with some honey added to it. And this is the only diet which he is taking four times in 24 hours. At half-past eight he retired for rest. And the day came to a close.

How Vinoba personally looks at his 'birthday' can be gathered from a letter he wrote to a distinguished woman-worker that day in response to her greetings. He said:

"Yes, it is birthday today. But even as the resident of a home is distinct from the home, we are distinct from our body. This truth must be grasped. We

never celebrate the 'birthday' of a home. We simply make use of it. We also keep it neat and tidy. Could we learn to behave with the body accordingly, how smooth and pleasant will life become!"

How true and yet how difficult! But Vinoba has crossed the ladder. And, in the words of the poet:

"—This man is freed from servile bonds
Of hope to rise, or fear to fall;
Lord of himself, though not of lands;
And having nothing, yet hath all."

May he live long, a full span of 125 years, to guide us on our path to build a New India!

24-9-54

All-India Nai Talim Conference

The Tenth All-India Nai Talim Conference will be held in Sanosra (Saurashtra)—30 miles from Bhavnagar) from 9th to 14th November, '54.

The first three days will be devoted to the Special Conference of field workers of Nai Talim, and the last three days to the General Conference covering Pre-Basic, Basic, Post-Basic, Teachers' Training and Adult Education (Sevagram Vishvavidyalaya).

An exhibition of the work of Nai Talim will also be organized as an integral part of the Conference.

It is the earnest desire of the Government and Nai Talim workers of Saurashtra that a large number of delegates should attend the Conference and thus inspire the work of Nai Talim in the State.

The Ministry of Railways has been approached for necessary Railway Concession (single fare for double journey) which will be sent in due time to delegates on application. For further particulars please write to:

Conference Secretary, Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Sevagram, Wardha.

E. W. Aryanayakam,
Secretary, Hindustani Talimi Sangh

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